



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/734,912	12/13/2000	Seiji Hayashi	0165-277	8781
7590	10/20/2003		EXAMINER	
Thomas W. Cole Nixon Peabody LLP Suite 800 8180 Greensboro Dr. McLean, VA 22102			DONOVAN, LINCOLN D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2832	
			DATE MAILED: 10/20/2003	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/734,912	HAYASHI ET AL.	
	Examiner Lincoln Donovan	Art Unit 2832	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 July 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 3 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-6 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ . 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Claim 3 is withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected specie, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 7.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-2 and 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 1, in lines 1-2, applicant should clarify what is meant by "a pair of 'opening positions'." In lines 4-5, applicant should clarify the specific position intended by "as seen from a vehicle occupant side." In lines 9-10, applicant should clarify the intended symmetry determined by **the** predetermined base line intersecting each of the 'opening positions'."

Regarding claim 2, applicant should clarify the structure intended by "one of the steering wheel dise constituting parts."

Regarding claim 4, applicant should clarify the symmetry intended by the "predetermined base line passes through a center of the steering wheel."

Regarding claim 5, in line 2, applicant should clarify what is meant by “opening positions’ are formed.” In line 4, applicant should clarify the specific position intended by “as seen from a vehicle occupant side.”

Regarding claim 6, in line 3, applicant should clarify what is intended by “a first opening portion.” In line 5, applicant should clarify the specific position intended by “as seen from the vehicle occupant.” In line 9, applicant should clarify what is intended by “the second opening portion.”

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-2 and 4-6, as best understood in view of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Leng [US 6,525,283].

Leng discloses a switch structure of a steering wheel [1] at which open portions [2] are formed between an inner periphery of a rim [7] of the steering wheel and an outer periphery of a pad cover [5] of the steering wheel wherein at each of the open portions a switch assembly [figure 4] constituted by a plurality of switches [9, 10] are disposed arranged such that the switching assemblies are symmetrical and can be mounted in either of the open portions [column 2, lines 45-55].

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

DeFilippo [US 5,756,950].

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lincoln Donovan whose telephone number is 703 308-3111. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:00.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1920.

ldd
10/7/03


LINCOLN DONOVAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER
GROUP 2100